

6 February 1963 

STATEMENT ON CUBA BY DIRECTOR OF
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

In view of the many conflicting rumors and reports concerning Soviet missiles and troops in Cuba, the Director of Central Intelligence, Mr. John A. McCone, has issued the following statement on the current status of Soviet military forces and equipment there. This statement represents the agreed views of the United States Intelligence Board, of which Mr. McCone is Chairman. This board is made up of the chief intelligence officers of the United States Government.*

It rests on the most up-to-date and reliable data available to the United States Government and is derived from all of the intelligence gathering resources at its disposal, including daily aerial surveillance.

*The members of the United States Intelligence Board are: General Carter, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence; Mr. Roger Hilsman, The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; Lieutenant General Joseph F. Carroll, Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense; Major General Alva R. Fitch, Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; Rear Admiral Vernon L. Lowrance, Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy; Major General Robert A. Breitweiser, Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, United States Air Force; Lieutenant General Gordon A. Blake, Director, National Security Agency; Major General Richard Collins, Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff; Mr. Harry S. Traynor, Assistant General Manager for Administration, Atomic Energy Commission; Mr. Alan H. Belmont, Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

STATEMENT

Hundreds of reports on Soviet forces in Cuba are received weekly by United States intelligence agencies and each of them is checked carefully for reliability and credibility by trained and experienced intelligence analysts. The totality of information derived from all sources, including extensive photographic coverage, gives the best picture available in the United States of the Soviet military presence in Cuba today.

At the President's direction the situation in Cuba has been regularly reviewed and information has been made available through the Department of Defense over the last several months.

As has been frequently reported, there was a substantial buildup of Soviet military equipment and military forces prior to the "quarantine" of October and November 1962. The USSR had in fact supplied a great deal of military equipment to Cuba prior to July 1962, including tanks, field artillery pieces, anti-tank guns, and jet military aircraft, all of which had been positively identified. On 1 July 1962 there were about 500 Soviet military technicians in Cuba advising and training the Cuban armed forces, then estimated at about 75,000 regulars, 100,000 militia and 100,000 homeguard.

In mid-July 1962 began the influx of Soviet military equipment and military personnel which was detected by our Intelligence Community and monitored into the crisis period of September and October, when the offensive nuclear weapon

systems (missiles and bombers) appeared. This build up ceased on October 24th, with the establishment of the quarantine. We are convinced beyond reasonable doubt, as has been stated by the Department of Defense, that all offensive missiles and bombers known to be in Cuba were withdrawn soon thereafter. Photography of ships loading in Cuban ports and at sea proves to our satisfaction the withdrawal of 42 medium range missiles and 42 bombers, their related equipment and attendant personnel. Reconnaissance has not detected the presence of offensive missiles or bombers in Cuba since that time.

Many rumors and reports of the continued presence of the offensive weapons in Cuba have been received. For instance, there have been a number of reports that offensive weapons have been concealed in caves. Some of these reports evidently derive from the known Cuban practice of using caves for storage of small-arms, ammunition and other items of military hardware. All statements alleging the presence of offensive weapons are meticulously checked. So far the findings have been negative. Absolute assurance on these matters, however, could only come from continuing, penetrating on-site inspection.

Prior to the 24th of October, however, very substantial quantities of Soviet military personnel and Soviet equipment, in addition to the offensive missiles and bombers,

had already reached Cuba. The inventory of tanks, jet aircraft, military trucks and field pieces more than doubled during this period. In addition many sophisticated Soviet military items appeared for the first time.

Soviet Military Personnel in Cuba

From a few hundred military technicians in the summer of 1962, the Soviet armed forces in Cuba grew by October 24th to include regular troops manning the tanks and other weapons of mobile armored groups, specialists in charge of an extensive surface-to-air missile system, and a large number of other air force, naval and army personnel.

Our current evaluation, based on all sources including known tables of organization of Soviet units, is that a total of about 22,000 Soviet troops were in Cuba during September and October. Since then about 5,000 troops associated with offensive missile systems have left. Some 17,000 Soviet military personnel now remain in Cuba.

Air Defense System

The USSR also planned and largely built an integrated air defense system employing surface-to-air (SAM) missiles, complex radars, anti-aircraft batteries and jet fighters.

There are 24 operational SAM sites, each with 6 launchers.

There is probably a total of about 500 SAM missiles in the system. The SAM sites appear to be manned entirely by Soviet personnel.

To supplement surface-to-air missiles, the Soviets brought in additional MIG fighters, reaching a total of about 100, including 42 MIG-21 aircraft, a modern high-speed (Mach 2) interceptor which can be used both for ground support and air defense. About 200 modern Soviet radars were installed to tie the system together.

Cruise Missiles

The Soviets have brought in approximately 150 coastal defense missiles and have thus far established 4 operational sites. A large number of these cruise missiles are still in storage, which suggests that the Cuban crisis interrupted a Soviet program to construct several more sites. There are probably missiles enough to establish 15 more sites. These coastal defense missiles have an estimated range of 30 to 40 nautical miles and hence the entire installation would provide a formidable coastal defense system.

Missile Patrol Boats

In addition, the Soviets brought in 12 KOMAR guided-missile patrol boats. These units appear to be operated by mixed Soviet and Cuban crews. They are Soviet motor torpedo boats with the hull modified to carry two missile launchers. The missile employed has a range of 10-15 nautical miles (limited by radar line-of-sight).

Soviet Armored Groups

The Soviets also introduced four mobile armored groups deployed at camps throughout Cuba. These four units have a total strength of about 5,000 officers and men. They also have tanks, armored personnel carriers, assault guns, mortars, and infantry rocket launchers. In addition there are several advanced-type tactical rocket launchers, anti-personnel weapons with a range of about 25 miles.

Shipping to Cuba

The U.S. intelligence agencies are closely observing Soviet ships calling at Cuban ports. The massive Soviet military deliveries to Cuba ceased on 23 October. At that time more than 15 ships at sea, undoubtedly fully loaded with military cargoes, turned back to the USSR.

Fifty odd Soviet-dry-cargo vessels have arrived in Cuba since 1 November. Of these only one has delivered any significant amount of military equipment to Cuba although small quantities may have arrived in other ships. An arms-carrying ship, the Simferopol, delivered a cargo on 17 January which we believe was exclusively military, but which, we know from dependable sources, did not contain offensive missiles or aircraft. Another ship with a similar cargo is probably now en route between the USSR and Cuba. The remaining Soviet and Bloc ships now en route to Cuba appear to be carrying principally commercial cargo. Soviet bloc shipping to Cuba is substantially higher than a year ago, and though free world shipping has decreased sharply, the total cargo tonnage now being received in Cuba is about the same as a year ago.

From all of this, we must conclude:

a) there remain large quantities of Soviet tanks, guns, aircraft and troops, most of which arrived before the quarantine; and

b) a relatively small amount of Soviet military equipment has reached Cuba in the period since the quarantine.

The intelligence community of the United States Government continues to keep under close surveillance and to report currently on this extraordinary deployment of sizeable Soviet military forces into the Western Hemisphere. All evidence reaching us, including reports from Cuban refugees but also including photography and other reliable sources, is carefully sifted and weighed. The United States Government must be provided the most accurate, responsible and balanced evaluation of the Soviet military presence in Cuba. Significant information concerning conditions in Cuba received by citizens or government officials should be transmitted to the intelligence community promptly for evaluation in our continuing close scrutiny of this grave situation.

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Next 16 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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